



City of Renton Planning Commission

Towing Docket Item 06-15

February 27, 2008

The Docket Request



- Request from Lee Isben of Lee's Towing Service.
 - Allow tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards in the Industrial Light (IL) and Commercial Arterial (CA) zones with limitations.
 - Vehicle storage must be contained inside a building. There are to be no exceptions to this requirement.
 - No heavy-duty (Class C) tow trucks and/or trucks that exceed 26,000 gross vehicle weight will be permitted on the premises.

Key Issues for Discussion



- Should tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards be allowed in the IL zone?
- Should tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards be allowed in the CA zone?
- If it should be allowed, what restrictions are appropriate?

Background



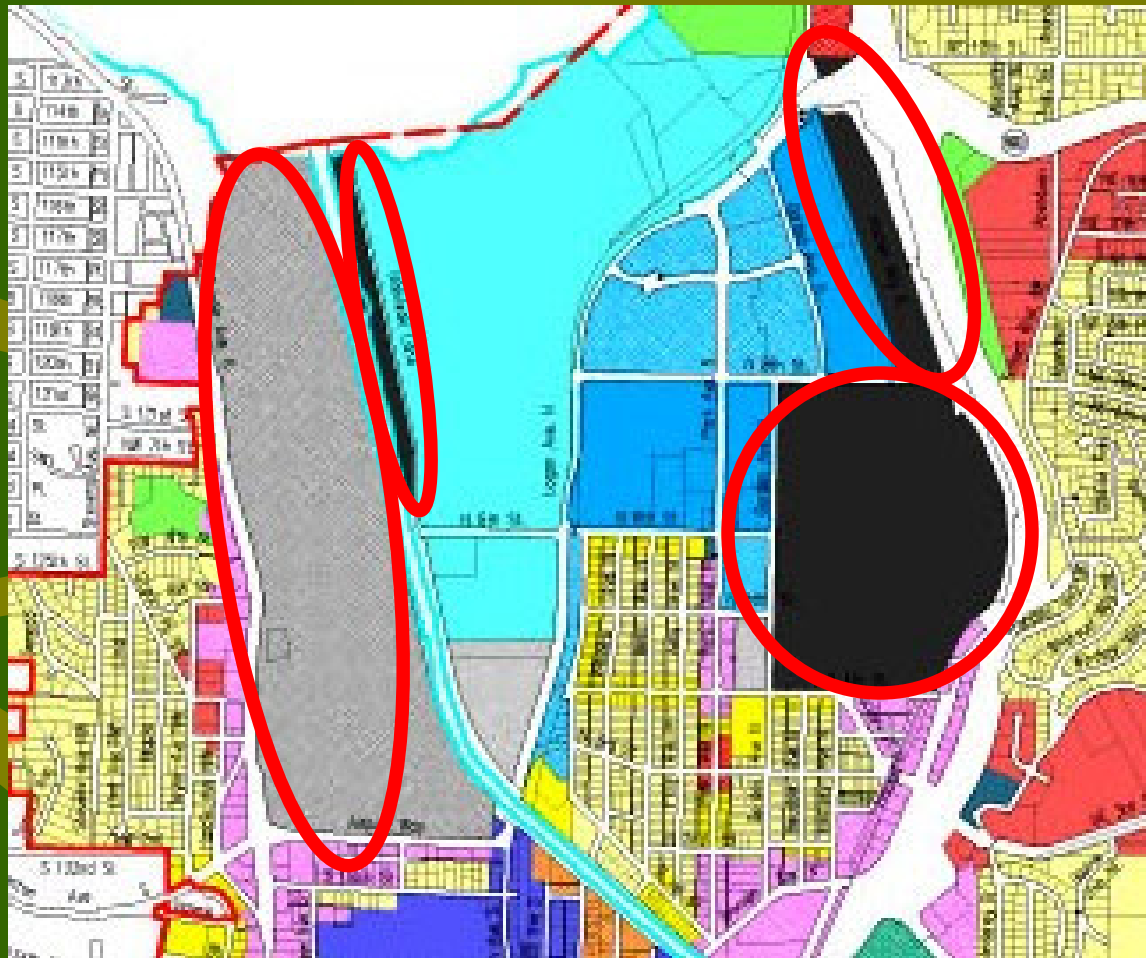
- Mr. Isben made this request in August 2006
- He made this request in an attempt to be able to keep his business in the City
- It was difficult for him to find available land at a reasonable price in an area that was zoned to allow tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards.

Background



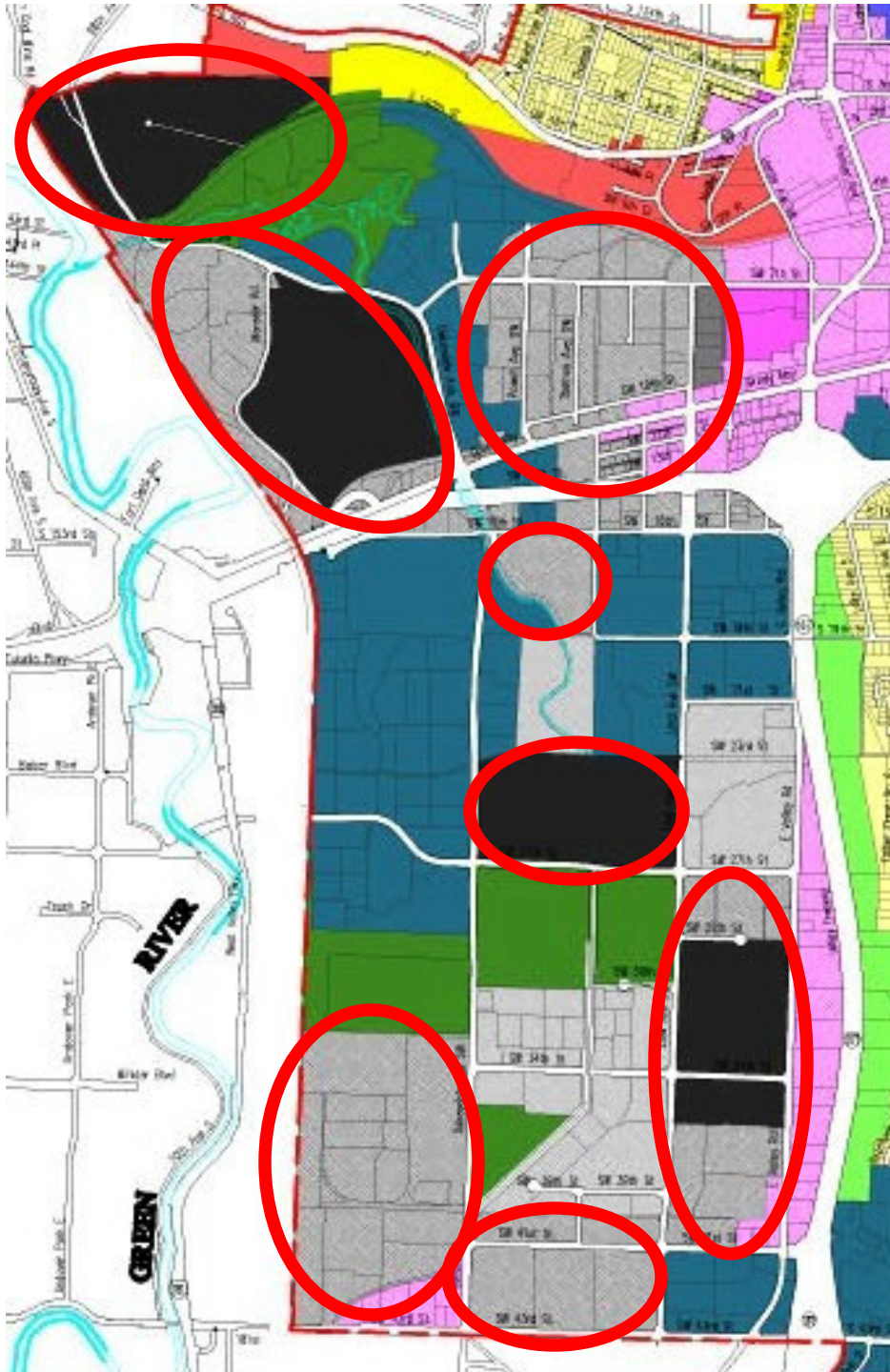
- Currently, the City allows tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards in:
 - Industrial Heavy zone – permitted
 - Industrial Medium zone – Hearing Examiner Conditional use
 - Excluded within the area south of I-405 and north of SW 16th Street.

IH and IM Zone






INDUSTRIAL

-  (IL) Industrial - Light
-  (IM) Industrial - Medium
-  (IH) Industrial - Heavy



IH and IM zone

INDUSTRIAL

-  (IL) Industrial - Light
-  (IM) Industrial - Medium
-  (IH) Industrial - Heavy

Background



- Much of the IH and IM zoned land is occupied with existing uses
 - Renton Municipal Airport
 - PACCAR
 - Merlino Quarry
 - King County wastewater
 - Warehouse uses



Towing in the IL Zone

Purpose Statement – IL Zone



- “*to provide areas for low-intensity manufacturing, industrial services, distribution, storage, and technical schools. . . Uses allowed in this zone are generally contained within buildings. Material and/or equipment used in production are not stored outside. Activities in this zone do not generate external emissions such as smoke, odor, noise, vibrations, or other nuisances outside the building. Compatible uses that directly serve the needs of other uses in the zone are also allowed.*”

Towing in IL Zone



- With Mr. Isben's suggestion of the condition of keeping tow truck operations/auto impoundment within a building the purpose of the IL zone is met.



Towing in the CA Zone

Purpose Statement – CA Zone



- *“to evolve from “strip commercial” linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning, incorporating efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities and boulevard treatment. The CA Zone provides for a wide variety of indoor and outdoor retail sales and services along high-volume traffic corridors. Limited residential uses may be integrated into the zone if there are permanent physical connections to commercial uses.”*

CA Zone



- Towing is a service
- However, CA also seeks to encourage residential use and pedestrian activity particularly in the business districts.
 - Business districts are all zoned CA.

Business Districts Purpose



- Seek the “*redevelopment of strip commercial urban forms into more concentrated urban forms, provide for design guidelines for residential development within the district, enhance the pedestrian environment, make the commercial environment more attractive, improve the City’s tax base, and result in a more successful business district.*”

CA Zone



- Business districts allow a maximum residential density of 60 dwelling units/acre in mixed use developments with height limit of 50 feet.
 - A single story building storing vehicles is not of the same scale/intensity
- Business districts seek pedestrian activity
 - Linked pedestrian trips
 - Towing is a service that does not encourage linked pedestrian activity.

CA Zone



- If allow towing in the CA it would be important to encourage linked visits and emphasize the service aspect of towing.
 - It may be reasonable to allow towing operations/auto impoundment when it is an accessory use to another auto related use, such as vehicle repair shops.

CA Zone



- It would also be important to limit the impact the building storing vehicles had on the pedestrian environment.
 - Limit the number of vehicles that can be stored.
 - Require tow vehicles to be garaged
- Accessory uses are defined as:
 - *“Uses customarily incidental and subordinate to the principal use and typically located upon the same lot occupied by the principal use.”*

CA Zone



- It may be appropriate to allow towing operations/auto impoundment yards in the CA zone outside the business districts and other prominent gateway locations in the CA zone.
- An administrative conditional use process could be used to ensure the number of vehicles was appropriate.
 - Also, ensure appropriate screening, landscaping, etc.

Towing Vehicle Classes

Tow Vehicle Class



- According to the Washington State Department of Licensing there are six classifications of tow trucks, those are:
 - *Trucks that are capable of towing and recovery of . . .*
 - Class A – passenger cars, pickup trucks, small trailers, or equivalent vehicles.
 - Class B – medium size trucks, trailers, motor homes, or equivalent vehicles.
 - Class C – large trucks, trailers, buses, motor homes, or similar vehicles.

Tow Vehicle Class



- Class A



- Class B



- Class C

Tow Vehicle Class



- Six classifications of tow trucks (cont.):
 - Class D – Trucks that are equipped for and primarily used as “wheel lift” trucks.
 - Class E – Trucks designed and intended to transport vehicles entirely on a truck bed.
 - Class S – Tow or recovery trucks that cannot meet the requirements of Class “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, or “E” and are not eligible for waiver per WAC 204-91A-070(4).

Tow Vehicle Class



- Class D

- Class E

Tow Vehicle Class



- What tow vehicle class is appropriate for each zone?
 - IL - ?
 - CA - ?
- Mr. Isben's request restricted tow facilities from keeping heavy duty (class C) trucks on the premises.

Conclusion



- Planning Commission feedback on:
 - Should the City allow towing operations/auto impoundment yards:
 - With requirement that vehicles are inside a building?
 - In the IL?
 - Permitted outright?
 - In the CA?
 - Administrative Conditional Use?

Conclusion



- Planning Commission feedback on:
 - What class of tow vehicles should be allowed:
 - In the IL?
 - A and B only?
 - Often E is considered light duty.
 - In the CA?
 - A and B only?
 - E?

